

The Human Touch

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and more!

Director's Message

It has been a busy time at DHS since the end of the legislative session.

I have been meeting with several groups of advocates to digest what happened during the session and how we can improve the outcomes for next year. It has been especially helpful to hear from the disability community and also the advocates that work with children.

I have also been excited to begin what we are calling our "Immersion" program at DCFS. We invited community leaders to spend two days with us taking an inside look at how our caseworkers do their jobs. Our first session was held last month and it was very successful. We were able to host such luminaries as Supreme Court Chief Justice Christine Durham, the head of Catholic Community Services Dee Rowland, pediatrician Dr. Thomas Metcalf and many others. Thanks to DCFS staff members who showed us what it was like to be an intake worker, a CPS worker, a foster care worker, an adoption worker, a nurse, and many other specialties. Our guests have not stopped talking to me about what an outstanding group of caseworkers we have at DHS! We are going to have another session in May and hopefully continue all year.

It has been interesting to meet with my fellow Cabinet members to discuss the challenges posed by the pandemic flu. Alan Ormsby (Division on Aging and Adult Services) is helping me take the lead throughout the department to plan our response. I have also spent a good deal of time this month meeting with mental health/substance abuse professionals throughout the state who are working through a new model of Hope and Recovery. One of the best things I've done all month is present awards to outstanding employees in JJS and also DSPD. We had wonderful finalists for Manager of the Year!



Lisa-Michele Church,
Executive Director

In the next few months we will be finishing the program review requested by the legislators to help us respond to federal budget cuts. I see this as a chance for DHS to really shine. We are going to tell our story throughout the summer at interim sessions and show exactly how valuable our services are for Utahns. Thanks for all you do!

Worksite Wellness: Making the Healthy Choice is the Easy Choice

Healthy Utah recognized Utah Department of Human Services April 6th with the Commitment to Wellness Award for their accomplishments in promoting worksite wellness.

Building a Healthy Environment was the theme of the statewide Wellness Council conference. Wellness Council members from state agencies learned new tools to increase employee worksite wellness activities.

"Making the Healthy Choice is the Easy Choice," said LaDene Larsen, RN, Health Promotion Bureau Director, Department of Health. "We spend a lot of time at work and creating environments that are pleasant and encouraging of healthy lifestyles are important to expanding the attitude of wellness."

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Worksite Wellness: Making the Healthy Choice is the Easy Choice

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Two DHS Wellness Councils learned techniques from other departments to increase staff wellness through health promotions such as:

- using stairs
- providing a place to exercise
- promoting walking
- healthy treats

The bottom line - we value employee health! Watch for tips on Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice in future Human Touch stories.

Does your office or team have tools to promote worksite wellness? Why not take some photos to share with others? We would enjoy featuring you in future articles. Please contact Manuel Romero, manuel@utah.gov or 801/538-9875.



Wellness Staff receives award from Mary Kaye Huntsman

Human Services Manager of the Year Named

Richard Anderson is still excited about being a manager after 32 years working in Utah Department of Human Services.

The Division of Child and Family Services Director was named DHS manager of the year April 3 after being nominated by his staff.

How does he retain that enthusiasm he felt as a young case worker? "I focus on the people we serve and how we make their lives better," Anderson said in accepting his award. "I also focus on the people who do the work."

Lisa-Michele Church, Executive Director highlighted comments from the nomination in the presentation, "Richard has, in his own quiet way, bravely fought for better understanding, and achieving better outcomes for children and families, with the legislature, the press, and the public, and helped create the trust that leads to stronger, better partnerships. He has taught through example, that through listening, understanding and working together, there are better ways to solve problems."

She concluded the presentation saying, "He is seen as a director who truly cares about the children and families we serve and he takes every opportunity to share with our caseworkers how important they are to the organization."



Congratulations, Richard!



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Office of Recovery Services Connects!

By Catherine Taylor

Recovery Services employees are getting to know their boss as he travels across the state talking to them about their interests and concerns and explaining how upcoming Federal budget cuts will affect them.

"It wasn't all good news to present across the state," said ORS Director Mark Brasher. "I was impressed by how well they received information about upcoming Federal budget cuts."

ORS teams are focusing on meeting their most important priorities as they work through the coming challenges.

Brasher and leadership team members Tracy Graham and Jackie Languet visited ORS offices statewide. Everywhere they found employees doing important work such as:

- Making sure child support becomes a reliable income source for families
- Keeping families from relying on public assistance.
- Identifying insurers so that medical care can be paid for
- Avoiding Medicaid assistance
- Returning funds to other DHS agencies

"We learned some of what motivates our employees," said Jackie. "Our employees have great ideas, enthusiasm, caring and concern." Jackie highlighted employee recognition ideas with ORS managers during the visits.

Interestingly enough, Shirley Harding, Quality Assurance Specialist for Ogden ORS received a letter of recognition for Governor Jon M. Huntsman on the same day the group arrived in the Ogden office. The Governor recognized her tireless work ethic and for being the invaluable policy expert that she is.

St. George staff showed off a creative way to track the increasing progress of paternity establishment. The clever bulletin board with cartoon pictures of crawling babies serves as a fun reminder that paternity establishment benefits children.

Six years ago, Jackie Carter was hired in Salt Lake as a child support agent working a paternity case-load. She chose to come to ORS to make a positive difference in the community. In her position, Jackie strives to give clients more than they expect. She explains to clients simply about the importance and complexities of paternity establishment. She will follow up with a phone call just to update them about what to expect next in an otherwise confusing process.

It was evident to the ORS leadership team all across the state, the 500+ ORS employees work together to serve their clients with strong commitment and dedication.

Manager of the Year Award Finalist - Congratulations Allen!

Provo, Allen Weatherspoon, Division of Services for People with Disabilities Supervisor and his team were surprised during their weekly staff meeting with a visit by Lisa-Michele Church, DHS Executive Director, Mark Ward and Marie Christman, Deputy Directors. They presented Allen with the Finalist, Manager of the Year Award. Congratulations Allen!



Webcasts Improve Department Communication

Have you ever traveled to another town just to show somebody a software application? Have you ever worked on the draft of a document with a group, but weren't sure everyone agreed on the final wording? How often have you wanted training but couldn't find time to travel to Salt Lake? Have you ever wanted to explain a new policy but couldn't find time to get around to everyone?

If so, your job may have gotten a lot easier. Our department now has new technology that allows employees to train, collaborate, demonstrate, and conference through the internet. It is called E/POP.

**Easy, New Tech Tool
You Can Use!**

"The days of travel drudgery are over for a lot of our workers," says Brian Nelson, the Department's Webcast coordinator. "Any time a group of people need to work on something visual together, webcasting is one of the preferred models."

What is webcasting? "It's a way of sharing both visual and audio information," said Vaughn Emmett, an enthusiastic E/POP user. "Face-to-face meetings are good, but often you can't get everyone together because we're spread all over the state. Using E/POP, we can have conferences as often as we need without the burden of travel. We can all work on the same application, documents and diagrams together. Whether it's collaborating on a draft, getting assistance, explaining policy, or training, E/POP can make our work easier."

"If a trust-account custodian in Blanding doesn't understand how to use our accounting software, I don't have to drive down there from Salt Lake to install it and train her," Nelson added. "Now I just install it through E/POP, and walk her through the training, watching everything she does on her desktop. If she doesn't understand what I'm telling her, I can actually do it for her and let her watch me as I explain. It's as if we were both sitting at her computer. And several Webcasts can be going on at the same time, making the product scalable for our needs."

Announcement: Hope Anthology

Provo – Ted Gerun, Utah State Hospital therapist requests assistance to gather "hopeful" information. Can you join in and help?

"I have been working on a Hope Anthology with collections of writings and Web site accessible recordings and video recordings that can be used in treating patients that are depressed and discouraged in the State Hospital," he said. The "hopeful" information will be used in group and individual therapy.

He already has an extensive library of written/narrative material and is now in need of recordings that are effective in instilling hope and motivation in patients. Who doesn't need more hope?

Please send the information and web addresses to tgerun@utah.gov.

"Thank you sincerely in advance." Ted said.



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Blanding DHS

By Donna Russell

Blanding, There is no place like the magnificent red rock country of Southeastern Utah. Roads stretch for miles and miles without gas stations or people. Worthy Glover, Sr and Larry Weatherford of the Division of Services for People with Disabilities told me about their adventures in providing services to their clients during my March visit.

"Some of our families do not have a telephone," says Worthy. "We may drive for several hours, not even sure they will be home when we arrive."

"When we visit in their homes our clients and their families are so happy to see us and appreciate the services DSPD can offer," concluded Larry.

If it's Pay Day – There's Breakfast at DCFS!

Blanding's Division of Child and Family Services staff gather together each payday for a

pot-luck breakfast. It's their chance to grab a few moments together and share life's happenings. I had the privilege of joining them. I can say the food and company are well worth the drive!

Mel Tracy, Child Protection Services caseworker, was preparing to go out and meet with a child, a routine task for any CPS worker. However this home visit required Mel to travel three hours by car and an hour-and-a-half by ferry across Lake Powell. That's just the one way drive across beautiful San Juan County. After meeting with the child, he will be retracing his steps back to his Blanding office.

"What if you need to remove the child from their home?" I asked him. "Then we will drive up to the Christmas Box House shelter in Moab," he told me. The round trip from Blanding to Moab is another three hours. Mel may have traveled 12 hours in one day, not counting the time interviewing the child and family!

Traveling long distances is routine for Southeastern Utah's Human Services staff. No wonder they enjoy breakfast together when they can!



Larry Weatherford and
Worthy Glover, Sr



Blanding DCFS Staff

Utah: A Great Place to Age!

By Maureen Henry, Executive Director, Commission on Aging

How will Utah look when one in five Utahns are age sixty-two and older? The proportion of Utahns over 61 is now slightly more than one in ten. By 2050, the proportion will increase to one in five. Although Utah is the youngest state in the nation, its aging population will see dramatic growth in the coming decades. No doubt these changes will impact how the Department of Human Services and other state services are effectively delivered. Now is the time to begin looking forward to those changes.

The Utah Commission on Aging was formed to consider how the increase in Utah's aging population will affect government, the private sector, and society in general. The Commission has undertaken numerous projects designed to promote improvement and system change through incremental steps, assess the effectiveness of interventions, develop enthusiasm around an aging agenda, and serve as the basis for future policy recommendations. The Commission's ultimate objective is to assure that Utah is a great place to age in the future.

Through its work, the Commission has identified two major themes. Most aging individuals in Utah are doing well and remain vibrant and contributing members of the community. At the same time, some who are aging are vulnerable and need help. Utah needs to maintain a safety net to assure that those who fall between the cracks due to dementia, failing health, isolation, or other causes receive the help they need.

The Commission's Special Committees are studying how every aspect of life is affected by aging. Special Committees and Work Groups include:

- Financial Security
- Quality of Life in Long-Term Care
- Healthcare
- Community-Based Care
- Caregiving
- Education
- Mental Health
- Transportation
- Public Safety
- Employers
- End-of-Life
- Volunteerism
- Housing



Commission on Aging Workgroup

Several issues dominate the Commission's agenda, with healthcare at the top of the list. Healthcare is among the top concerns of those who are aging, and the spiraling cost of healthcare creates a sense of insecurity. The Commission is addressing concerns about payment for long-term care, quality of life in residential settings, availability of care directed to the needs of aging patients, availability of support necessary to allow frail individuals to remain at home, health promotion, and long-term feasibility of Medicaid.

The need for correct and comprehensive information about services and benefits is a concern across committees, from education, to healthcare, to housing. In a recent survey, the most frequent response to the question "Where would you go to find information about services?" was "Don't know." The Commission is working with various state government departments and private agencies to assure that existing systems effectively provide information on aging resources and services.

The Commission will continue to work to assure that aging individuals in Utah can access services that allow them to remain active, independent, and fulfilled. In addition, the Commission wants to assure that quality programs to support vulnerable aging individuals are in place and that government programs provide the greatest possible value to the beneficiaries of those programs.

For more information contact Maureen Henry, Executive Director, Commission on Aging or call 801.538.4435.

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Published by
Utah Dept. of
Human
Services
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Church, Exec-
utive Director

Edited by
Donna L.
Russell
Layout by
Rich Rayl
120 N 200 W
SLC, UT 84103